

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BANGKO 11494 01 OF 02 261908Z

40

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 SS-15 MC-02 IGA-02

TRSE-00 EB-07 AID-05 ACDA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 /098 W

----- 123430

R 261009Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4670

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 11494

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: PRESS INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PICHAI RATTAKUN

1. FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PICHAI RATTAKUN  
APPEARED IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE THE NATION APRIL 26.

2. BEGIN TEXT Q: WHAT'S THE FIRST FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE YOU  
PLAN TO TACKLE?

A: MY FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE OUR RELATIONS WITH THE  
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA.  
THIS WILL BE MY URGENT TASK.

Q: WHAT ARE THE STEPS YOU PLAN TO TAKE IN THAT DIRECTION?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 11494 01 OF 02 261908Z

A: I WOULD HAVE TO STUDY DETAILS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED

SINCE THE CHANGES IN INDOCHINA LAST YEAR. I WANT, FIRST, TO FIND OUT THE OFFICIAL RECORDS ON THE DISCUSSIONS THAI AUTHORITIES HAD WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION WHICH PAID A VISIT HERE LAST YEAR.

Q: THE OUTSTANDING ISSUE SEEMS TO BE THE DISPUTE OVER WAR EQUIPMENT FLOWN HERE AFTER SAIGON FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS. WHAT'S YOUR STAND ON THIS ISSUE?

A: FROM PRESS REPORTS, THE AMERICAN CLAIM RIGHTS

OVER THOSE PLANES AND EQUIPMENT AND THE VIETNAMESE ALSO CLAIM THE SAME THING. THEREFORE, I WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A STUDY ON THE ISSUE BEFORE I DECIDE WHAT TO DO. IF THAT'S THE MAJOR OBSTACLE, WE WOULD HAVE TO ANALYZE THE QUESTION CAREFULLY

Q: YOU MEAN YOU ARE WILLING TO RECONSIDER THE ISSUE?

A: YES.

Q: AM I RIGHT TO ASSUME THAT YOU DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO FOLLOW THE SAME STAND TAKEN BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE?

A: CORRECT. ON THIS ISSUE, I DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE TO STICK TO THE STAND THAT HANOI SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE UNITED STATES DIRECTLY. THAT, TO ME, IS NOT NECESSARILY THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S STAND.

Q: WOULD YOU TRY TO MAKE ANY NEW POSITIVE INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS WITH THESE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES THEN?

A: I TOLD THE PRESS TWO DAYS AGO THAT THAILAND IS SINCERE IN DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS. I HAVE DISPLAYED MY SINCERITY. THE GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT TO BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT WILL EMPHASIZE THIS POINT TOO. I HOPE THAT SINCE WE HAVE DISPLAYED OUR SINCERITY AND GOODWILL. VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS WILL REACT FAVORABLY TO OUR GESTURE.

Q: ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IS THE LACK OF COORDINATION IN POLICIES BETWEEN THE DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTRIES. THE MILITARY WANT TO TAKE A HARD LINE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY A MORE DIPLOMATIC APPROACH. WHAT'S YOUR STAND ON THIS ISSUE?

A: I THINK COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE LESS PROBLEMATIC. BOTH MINISTRIES ARE UNDER THE DEMOCRAT PARTY. BASICALLY, IT MEANS THAT POLICIES OF BOTH MINISTRIES WILL HAVE TO GO HAND IN HAND. I FEEL THAT DURING THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE DEFENSE MINISTER AND FOREIGN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 11494 01 OF 02 261908Z

MINISTER WERE FROM THE SAME PARTY, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S LINE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN MORE IMPORTANCE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD TO BE STEP OR TWO BEHIND. IN MY OPINION, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN POLICIES -- AND THE DEFENSE MINISTRY COOPERATING WITH IT.

Q: BUT THEN THERE ARE THOSE IN THE ARMY WHO MAY THINK OTHERWISE..

A: I THINK WE WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT REALITIES IN OUR

RELATIONS WITH OUR NEIGHBORS. IT'S JUST LIKE OUR TIES WITH CHINA WHERE THE COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORTS ARMED STRUGGLES IN OTHER COUNTRIES BUT THE PEKING GOVERNMENT ENJOYS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH OUR GOVERNMENT. OUR RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA WOULD FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN. WE MUST FACE FACTS THERE AS MUCH AS THOSE IN CHINA. IF THEY SUPPORT ARMED STRUGGLE HERE, IT'S OUR DUTY TO TRY TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS IN CONNECTION WITH THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE PEOPLE. THAT'S OUR METHOD OF FIGHTING ARMED STRUGGLE. I DON'T AGREE WITH THE ATTITUDE THAT IF THEY THROW A STONE AT US, WE SHOULD THROW ONE BACK AT THEM. BROADLY SPEAKING, IT IS OUR DUTY TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF OUR OWN PEOPLE. AND THAT'S THE MOST EFFICIENT COUNTER-INSURGENCY TACTIC.

Q: YOU MENTIONED TWO DAYS AGO THAT WE WILL PROVIDE AID TO INDOCHINA. WHAT SORT OF ASSISTANCE DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

A: SINCE WE HAVE PRONOUNCED OUR SINCERE ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBORS, IT MUST NOT BE ONLY PAYING LIP SERVICE. WE USED TO TREAT LAOS AS A LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRY. THAT SORT OF MENTALITY HAS TO GO. WE SHOULD PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LAOS IN WHATEVER WAY WE CAN.

Q: WHAT'S YOUR THINKING ABOUT ASEAN?

A: WE SUPPORT ASEAN WHICH WE BELIEVE IS A GOOD ORGANIZATION. BUT I WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY "OBSCENE" SUGGESTION THAT ASEAN SHOULD BE TURNED INTO A MILITARY BLOC. BUT I AM FOR A MOVE TO VIGOROUSLY PURSUE THE IDEA OF CREATING A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN THE REGION. IN PRINCIPLE, NEUTRALITY IS OK. BUT IN TERMS OF ACTION, I THINK EACH COUNTRY MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT APPROACH WHILE THE ULTIMATE GOAL REMAINS THE SAME. THE PHILIPPINES, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY ADOPT AN APPROACH NOT EXACTLY SIMILAR TO OURS IN WORKING TOWARDS THE GOAL. OF COURSE, IN BROAD TERMS THERE MUST BE JOINT EFFORTS. BUT IN TRYING TO GET THE RECOGNITION OF THE SUPERPOWERS. THE APPROACH OF EACH MEMBER COUNTRY MAY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BANGKO 11494 01 OF 02 261908Z

DIFFER, DEPENDING ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES.

Q: AREN'T THERE INHERENT CONFLICTS AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES THEMSELVES?

A: THERE MAY BE TO CERTAIN EXTENT BECAUSE AFTER ALL NATIONAL INTERESTS OF EACH COUNTRY COME FIRST. BUT AGAIN, THERE HAVE NOT BEEN CONCRETE RESULTS IN ASEAN. BECAUSE OF MY DEEP INTEREST IN ASEAN, I PLAN TO VISIT ALL ASEAN CAPITALS ONCE I SETTLE DOWN IN MY NEW JOB. POSSIBLY IN LATE MAY -- PROVIDED, OF COURSE, THAT THE HOUSE CASTS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

Q: AND YOUR OPINION ON THE SUPERPOWERS? THE SOVIET UNION -- TO START WITH.

A: WE DO NOT FAVOR ANY PARTICULAR SUPERPOWER. IF THE RUSSIANS HAVE COME IN A BIG WAY IN INDOCHINA, IT'S THEIR WISH TO FILL THE VACUUM CREATED BY THE DEPARTURE OF THE

AMERICANS. THAT'S THEIR OWN AFFAIR. BUT AS FAR AS THAILAND IS CONCERNED, WE WILL NOT DUMP OUR WEIGHT TO ANYONE IN PARTICULAR. LET'S BE FRIENDS ON AN EQUAL AND CONSISTENT BASIS. AND WE HOPE THE THREE SUPERPOWERS WOULD VIEW THAILAND WITH SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTAND OUR SITUATION.

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BANGKO 11494 02 OF 02 261236Z

40

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 SS-15 MC-02 IGA-02

TRSE-00 EB-07 AID-05 ACDA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 /098 W

----- 118266

R 261009Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4671

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

UNCLAS FINAL SECTION OF 2 BANGKOK 11494

USIA PASS IEA

Q: YOU THINK THAILAND COULD ADOPT AN "EQUIDISTANCE POLICY" WITH THE MAJOR POWERS?

A: YES, I THINK SO.

Q: ARE THERE ANY CONDITIONS CONNECTED WITH THAT POLICY?

A: I AM THINKING WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THAILAND COULD REACH AGREEMENTS WITH CHINA, THE UNITED STATES OR THE SOVIET UNION ALONG THE LINE OF TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. ALONG THAT LINE -- NOTE EXACTLY THE SAME. OUR

POLICY IS TO ACCEPT AID FROM ALL COUNTRIES WITHOUT STRINGS ATTACHED. ALONG THE LINE OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT, I BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE WAYS AND MEANS THAILAND COULD HANDLE THE SITUATION -- SO THAT WE COULD KEEP AN EQUAL DISTANCE FROM THE THREE GIANTS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 11494 02 OF 02 261236Z

Q: WILL THAILAND BECOME A PAWN IN THE CHINESE-RUSSIAN RIVALRY?

A: WE WERE IN THIS SORT OF SITUATION DURING KING RAMA V'S REIGN. I BELIEVE, IN BROAD TERMS AGAIN, THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN FOREIGN POLICY WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTRY FOLLOWING THE LINE. WE MUST SOLVE OUR INTERNAL PROBLEMS FIRST. I AM STILL OPTIMISTIC THAT WE CAN SURVIVE THE RAMIFICATIONS FROM THE RIVALRY AMONG THE GIANTS, IF WE HANDLE THINGS -- SENSITIVE THOUGH THEY MAY BE -- PROPERLY AND AVOID BEING USED AS ARENA FOR THEIR STRUGGLE.

Q: AND DO YOU THINK THAILAND'S NOTORIETY IN TRYING TO BEND WITH THE WIND IN DIPLOMACY WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK?

A: WHAT I JUST SAID WAS NOT BENDING WITH THE WIND. BUT I BELIEVE WE WILL BE ABLE TO CONDUCT OUR FOREIGN POLICY WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY. LET'S FACE IT, OUR FOREIGN POLICY USED TO BE INFLUENCED BY OTHERS -- BY OTHER COUNTRIES. BUT FROM NOW ON, I BELIEVE WE CAN EXERCISE MORE FLEXIBILITY. THERE MAY STILL BE SOME SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, OF COURSE, WHERE WE HAVE TO SEE WHERE THE WIND BLOWS.

Q: A FEW DAYS AGO, SINGAPORE'S PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT AFTER VIETNAM, IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN AN INSURGENCY SITUATION IN THIS REGION. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT LINE OF THINKING?

A: THE UNITED STATES AND THAILAND, WE MUST ADMIT, HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR A LONG TIME. I WANT TO KEEP THAT FAVORABLE RELATIONSHIP. BUT I AGREE WITH LEE KUAN YEW. YOU CAN NOTICE THAT KISSINGER HAS BEEN PLACING EMPHASIS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND OTHER AREAS. THE UNITED STATES SEEMS TO HAVE WRITTEN OFF SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THAT SENSE. BUT I WOULD THINK THE AMERICAN INTEREST IN THIS REGION WOULD NOT DISAPPEAR TOTALLY.

Q: DO YOU CONFIRM THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO HAVE ALL THE REMAINING AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL PULLED OUT WITHIN FOUR MONTHS STILL STANDS?

A: YES, DEFINITELY. LET'S LOOK AT IT THIS WAY: WHAT BENEFITS DO WE THAIS DERIVE FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE FACILITIES SUCH AS RAMASUN AND KO KHA. PERHAPS, THERE MAY BE SOME BENEFIT FOR US. BUT IT'S THE AMERICANS WHO GET 99 PERCENT OF THE BENEFITS. I WON'T TALK ABOUT THE PAST, BUT LET'S LOOK AT THE PRESENT REALITIES AND THE PATH WE WANT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 11494 02 OF 02 261236Z

TO TAKE IN THE FUTURE. REAL BENEFITS WE COULD DERIVE FROM THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE ARE NEGLIGIBLE.

Q: HOW COULD YOU REACT IF THE AMERICANS ASK TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS?

A: I'M NOT SURE HOW THEY WOULD GO ABOUT RESUMING THE TALKS. BUT SINCE WE ARE FRIENDS, WE CAN ALWAYS SIT DOWN AND TALK.

Q: JAPAN. WHAT'S YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS JAPAN'S ROLE IN THIS REGION?

A: JAPAN WILL CONTINUE TO BE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT FIELDS. THE JAPANESE WILL WATCH THE GOVERNMENT'S STABILITY VERY CAREFULLY. AND I BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT STABILITY TO ATTRACT JAPANESE INVESTORS HERE. I AM SURE JAPAN WILL ALSO HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT POLITICAL ROLE IN ASIA. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A CLOSER POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAILAND AND JAPAN. IN THE PAST, THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME STRANGE GAPS BETWEEN US. AND IN THIS I INCLUDE AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

Q: DO YOU ENVISAGE A GREATER POLITICAL ROLE OF JAPAN IN THAILAND AND SOUTHEAST ASIA?

A: THAT'S A VERY SENSITIVE ISSUE. AS THE FIRST STEP, I THINK JAPAN WILL MOVE STRONGLY IN THE FIELD OF INVESTMENT FOLLOWING A BRIEF LULL. BUT I DON'T AGREE WITH JAPAN'S TRYING TO GET TOO INVOLVED IN POLITICS HERE. FOR EXAMPLE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY JAPAN HAD TO SHOW SO MUCH EAGERNESS IN PARTICIPATING IN THE ASEAN SUMMIT. THAT WAS A SEPARATE MATTER. WHY DON'T WE TRY TO PERSUADE BURMA OR INDOCHINA MORE?

Q: AND YOUR PLANS TO TOUR AROUND?

A: FIRST, I WANT TO VISIT ASEAN COUNTRIES. THEN, PERHAPS, BURMA. I FEEL THAT BURMA IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US. AND IN THE PAST, BURMA WAS NOT HAPPY WITH US ON MANY ISSUES, WHICH ARE WELL KNOWN. I WANT TO INFORM THE BURMESE LEADERS THAT WE HAVE NOW ENTERED A NEW ERA. IF I HAVE A CHANCE TO VISIT BURMA, I THINK I CAN CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THAILAND.

Q: THE FACT THAT MR. LEK NANA WAS MADE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER HAS LED TO SPECULATION THAT THAILAND MAY BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

A: YES. THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED AMONG OURSELVES. WE DON'T KNOW HOW SUCCESSFUL WE WILL BE. MR. LEK AND I WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE MIDDLE EAST. BESIDES, WE WANT TO

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BANGKO 11494 02 OF 02 261236Z

PARTICIPATE IN THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP. THAT'S IN OUR POLICY STATEMENT. WE WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT AND BE CLOSE TO THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP. THE TIMING AND APPROACH IN JOINING THE

GROUP IS ANOTHER MATTER.

Q: HOW WOULD YOU DIVIDE YOUR WORK WITH YOUR DEPUTY?

A: I WILL GIVE MY DEPUTY SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS. I HAVE  
KNOWN MR. LEK FOR A LONG TIME AND HE IS AN HONEST  
BUSINESSMAN. AND HE WILL BE VERY CAPABLE IN DEALING WITH  
THE ARAB COUNTRIES. END TEXT  
WHITEHOUSE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 APR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BANGKO11494  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760158-0251  
**From:** BANGKOK  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760424/aaaaatpa.tel  
**Line Count:** 338  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** buchant0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 30 AUG 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <30 AUG 2004 by cookms>; APPROVED <14 DEC 2004 by buchant0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESS INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PICHAI RATTAKUN  
**TAGS:** MARR, MPOL, MILI, PFOR, PGOV, TH, XX, (PICHAI RATTAKUN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006